

# Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

**MONITORING IN ANESTHESIA AND CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE**—Edited by Casey D. Blitt, MD, Attending Anesthesiologist, Tucson Medical Center, El Dorado Medical Center and Northwest Hospital, and former Professor of Anesthesiology, University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson. Churchill Livingstone Inc, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1985. 707 pages, \$79.

This multiauthored textbook contains 28 chapters devoted to providing a complete "state-of-the-art" text on monitoring in anesthesia and critical care medicine. The book is divided into six sections—general principles, cardiovascular care systems, respiratory system, central nervous system, miscellaneous and anesthetic subspecialties. Although nearly every conceivable, currently used monitoring approach is described, the emphasis is clearly on anesthesia rather than critical care medicine.

As with any multiauthored text, the chapters vary in intensity, length and quality. Technically, the large print and illustrations make the book easy to read. Most of the authors are leading authorities in their respective fields. As a result, most of the chapters represent in-depth analyses of each form of monitoring, especially the chapters on central venous pressure, invasive blood pressure and respiratory monitoring. There is only a modest amount of overlap among chapters, which is unusual in a multiauthored text. This certainly is a credit to the editor.

That books frequently are not up-to-date when published partly applies to this text. In most chapters, the most current reference is 1982. Not surprisingly, many of the chapters are not "state-of-the-art" in their descriptions of monitoring techniques, particularly in electrocardiography, neuromuscular monitoring, blood gas analysis and computers. The computer chapter is especially weak in view of how rapidly computer science is evolving, especially in critical care medicine.

While this text is excellent with the technical and medical aspects of monitoring, this reviewer was disappointed that a greater emphasis was not placed on a cost-benefit analysis. For example, recognizing the high expenditure of funds and resources for monitoring, how much has patient care been enhanced from an outcome point of view? The chapter entitled "The Swan-Ganz Catheter: Past and Present" by Swan and Ganz is especially disappointing in this regard. Conversely, Dr Vandam's chapter "The Senses as Monitors" is particularly refreshing in emphasizing the value of basic monitoring in anesthesia. In an atmosphere of cost-containment, overall improved outcome needs to be equated (or not equated) to the use of sophisticated, expensive monitoring; that was not adequately done in this text.

Overall, this text represents a modest description of monitoring for critical care medicine. It is highly recommended, however, for those wishing information regarding perioperative monitoring.

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**COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT OF RESPIRATORY EMERGENCIES**—Edited by Barry E. Brenner, MD, PhD, Assistant Director, Emergency Medicine Center, UCLA Hospital and Clinics, and Assistant Professor of Medicine, UCLA Center for Health Sciences, Los Angeles. Aspen Publishers, Inc, 1600 Research Blvd, Rockville, MD 20850, 1985. 386 pages, \$61.50.

This book, containing 20 chapters and written by a number of authors, reviews a variety of urgent respiratory problems and diseases frequently encountered in emergency rooms. The major topics include thoracic trauma, respiratory failure, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, acid-based abnormalities, pulmonary edema and embolism, inhalational disorders, high altitude pulmonary edema, decompression sickness, chest radiology, the neonatal airway, oxygen therapy and procedures involving the upper airway and thorax. The chapters generally provide in-depth clinical discussion as well as practical approaches to the manage-

ment of these respiratory disorders. The majority of chapters contain helpful tables and instructive figures. The chapters are completed with reference lists containing from 36 to 362 citations.

Some shortcomings are evident. The sequence of chapter topics might have been better organized for reading continuity—for example, related conditions (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) could have been placed next to each other rather than several chapters apart. Discussions of pneumothorax, hemothorax, pneumonia and pulmonary edema were repeated in several chapters by different authors; however, varied perspectives sometimes may be desirable. Despite a comprehensive approach the book lacks adequate discussion about respiratory muscle fatigue, diagnostic studies of the lower extremities in the diagnosis of pulmonary thromboembolism, drowning and drug overdose. A chapter on the radiologic appearance of specific pneumonias did not include any chest radiographs.

Overall, I believe that this book is an excellent textbook for physicians in the emergency department and critical unit. The chapters are generally well written and concise and provide the essential information about appropriate topics. This reference work accomplishes its general goal of supplying experienced physicians with more of a comprehensive and accurate review of the literature rather than does a manual-style collection of practical recipes and techniques.

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**COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW IN TOXICOLOGY**—Peter D. Bryson, MD, Medical Director, Poison Treatment Center, Emergency Medicine Staff, St Anthony Hospital Systems, Denver. Aspen Publishers, Inc, 1600 Research Blvd, Rockville, MD 20850, 1986. 329 pages, \$33.

Aspen Publications has produced a 300-page review of toxicology by a single author, Peter D. Bryson, MD, who is the medical director of the Poison Treatment Center at St Anthony Hospital Systems of Denver. This \$33 text has 16 chapters dealing with broad areas of toxicology. The author intends the text to be used by clinicians involved in the management of poison patients, and intends the text to be both comprehensive and practical. This easily readable text partially meets these goals. It is evident that this text grew out of a series of lectures that have been transformed into a book. The tables are almost exclusively materials explained in the text and add little to the ease of understanding the data presented. Introductory chapters on pharmacokinetics and toxicokinetics as well as the general management of the overdoses are straightforward. The text is especially useful in that it is written by one author in a uniform style. Unfortunately, the author mentions controversial areas and rarely reviews them in detail. Although there are detailed references and suggested readings, most of these are from the 1970s or early 1980s. In the final analysis, the real question is whether this text would be preferred over more detailed reviews that are published in multiauthored texts by Winchester or Goldfrank. When compared with these texts the subjects covered are in general treated more superficially. Because of the uniform style and easy readability, however, this text does serve a useful purpose for those readers anxious to learn the basics of clinical toxicology.

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**OTOLOGIC RADIOLOGY, WITH CLINICAL CORRELATIONS**—Ramon Ruenes, MD, Professor of Radiology, National Autonomous University of Mexico, and Director, Center for Head and Neck Radiology, Mexico City, and